I don’t think there was a particular way of knowing in the decision on whether Data was the property of Starfleet because in both arguments they seemed to use multiple ways of knowing such as language, perception, emotion and reason.

In the first argument perception and language was mainly used. Data was constantly referred to as ‘it’, this made Data seem of less importance than he actually was. By referring to Data as ‘it’ he was further and further dehumanized making it easier to neglect his importance to Starfleet and consider him replicable which was far from the truth. Language was also used when Data was asked the question “what are you?” this was more of a strategy to force Data to admit to himself and the judge that he was a mere machine.

Perception was the brought in when Data was asked to bend an incredibly hard metallic object which he did with ease. By allowing Data to show his supernatural strength he was again classes a machine because normal people do not have such strength. Later Data’s arm was removed; the simple act of Data being able to remove his arm was just an emphasis on what Data actually was. Finally Data was switched off; I think this was done to show that Data doesn’t really have a choice in the first place.

In Data’s defense the argument was based on all four of the ways of knowing and I think this is the reason why the judge was convicted that was not Starfleet’s property. The commander first argument was a mixture of both sense perception and emotion. He brought out a number of Data’s positions that he still kept. He asked Data “why do you keep these things?” Data replays by saying “because I like them” by doing this Data displays a human characteristic which is to keep something not because you need it but simply because you want to. The commander then takes a hologram of a woman and asks Data who this woman was to him. Data simply said “we were intimate” by doing so he shows another characteristic which is emotion.

The commander then called Picard on to the stand. He asks Picard the characteristics of a human. Picard mentions that he/she must be intelligent, must have self awareness and consciousness. The commander uses reason when he compares Data to these three characteristics of being human. Data was proved to be intelligent and self awarded therefore Data was not just a machine.

The commander finally referred to Picard’s plan on making more of Data which would eventually create a new race and the humans would be judged depending on how they treat this new race. Basically he was trying to remind them on the slave trade that occurred many centuries ago.

This is why I came to the conclusion that more than one way of knowing was used in the decion making on Data’s role in Starfleet.